

**NATIONAL AERONAUTICS  
AND  
SPACE ADMINISTRATION**

**APOLLO  
HONOR AWARDS CEREMONY**

**APRIL 4, 1973  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

## FOREWORD

Today we have come together to celebrate the success of the Apollo 17 mission and to honor some of those who have contributed to its success and to the success of the entire Apollo Program.

Apollo 17 marks this Nation's twenty-seventh manned expedition into space and the sixth landing by Americans on the Moon. Riding in the Apollo 17 Command Module, "America", Astronauts Eugene A. Cernan, Ronald E. Evans and Harrison H. Schmitt began their journey moonward on December 7.

As were all previous Apollo missions, Apollo 17 must, indeed, be counted a voyage of discovery, a grand search to add to the storehouse of knowledge gleaned from exploration beyond Earth's atmosphere. The Taurus-Littrow site, a region of both high mountains and lowlands upon which Astronauts Cernan and Schmitt landed, was selected to fill in major gaps in the developing model of the Moon evolved from information from previous lunar missions. As they traversed the lunar surface, Astronaut Evans remained in lunar orbit conducting experiments and making observations and investigations of the environment around the Moon.

The mission of Apollo 17 established many records. Its 12 days, 13 hours and 51 minutes of flight made it the longest in duration of any previous Apollo flight. It was the longest in distance traversed (35 km or 22 nautical miles) and time (more than three days) spent on the Moon. The time spent in lunar orbit (more than six days) also set a new record. Astronauts Cernan and Schmitt gathered and brought back to Earth the largest and most varied collection of lunar samples, totaling 250 pounds.

This mission also brought to the lunar surface the first geologist astronaut, Harrison Schmitt. Many new instruments for use on the Moon and during lunar orbit added to the important data gathered by the crew of Apollo 17.

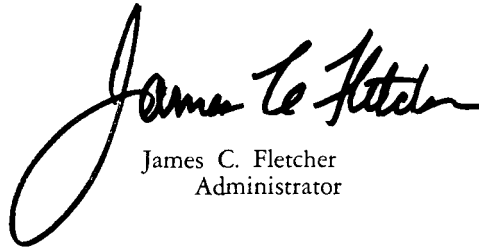
On this last mission, a message by Astronaut Cernan was given to the youth of the world through the 80 teenage members and representatives of 79 nations of NASA's and the United States' International Youth Science Tour. He told them and a worldwide audience he and Schmitt had selected a rock from Taurus-Littrow as a symbol of a future world of peace and harmony and as a permanent reminder of a future that one day will see a world of unity. The Apollo program demonstrated to all the world that unity of purpose in a free society could bring even the Moon within man's reach.

But perhaps the richest achievement of all is the spiritual unity this program provided by enabling all Americans, and all the world watching our astronauts' progress moonward to discover the uniqueness of our beautiful yet fragile Earth as viewed from the perspective of the Moon. Unique in the solar system, it is the only home of the Family of Man; and seen from

the perspective of the Moon, the common humanity that we all share becomes more evident than the temporal differences that keep us apart.

Our manned vehicle for our new focus in space is Skylab, a flying laboratory fashioned from the hardware developed for Apollo. This vehicle, as it orbits Earth, will seek out new discoveries about the Sun and the stars with a space telescope, and study Earth and its inhabitants. It also will serve as a laboratory where man will be studied to determine mankind's future role in space..

The space program came into being 15 years ago. Now we can look back at a record of proud achievements in space both from our unmanned satellites and from our manned spacecraft. If past is prologue as I most sincerely believe it to be where our efforts in space are concerned, then we can look ahead to many more such celebrations.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James C. Fletcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

James C. Fletcher  
Administrator